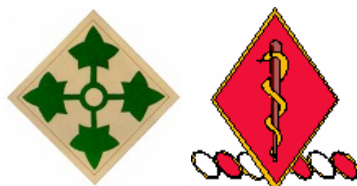


The Rough Rider RoundUp

204TH Support Battalion Newsletter – Camp Duke, Iraq



JANUARY 2006

From the Corral of Rough Rider 6

Greetings to the Family and Friends of the Rough Rider Family.

Folks, wanted to send you all a note letting you know how we are all doing and of course the Battalion Commander's letter can't be complete without the obligatory recap of all the significant events we have accomplished to date. So here goes:

We arrived in Kuwait, moved into Iraq via plane and truck and settled on Camp Duke. I will leave the rest of the details up to the company newsletters. How was that for brevity!



Most importantly as you read this you know that the Battalion has

weathered the holiday season without our loved ones. This time of year is always hard on everyone. What you all need to know is that we missed being with you over the holiday season and that you were all in our thoughts and prayers.

Additionally, as you all know by now the Brigade has suffered its first casualties. Please keep the families that lost loved ones in your prayers; they will need our support in the days ahead. With that said you need to know that FOB Duke is in a safe location. We are located in a fairly secure area and the post is located out in the middle of the desert making it hard to access without being noticed by our guard force. So

“We love those care packages!”



sleep soundly knowing that we are in good shape on the Camp.

Lastly I want you all to know how proud I am of everyone over here. Your loved ones have done amazing things to get the battalion ready to support the Brigade and we keep getting better everyday. Please take care of yourselves back home and I hope you and your families have a very happy New Year.

Happy Holidays,

“Rough Rider 6”





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From the 'Branding Iron' of Rough Rider 7

Greetings to all Family and Friends of the Rough Rider Battalion. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for supporting your loved ones and all service members around the world. We're finally settled in here at Camp Duke, Iraq. Our Soldiers are adapting to the separation from all of you in good spirits. Our daily operations are pretty much in sync with our daily operations at FT Hood. Soldiers are conducting Physical Training, Individual Training, Convoy Operations and Maintenance Operations.

Soldiers will soon be living in "Containers", which are far better living conditions than the tents we're accustomed too. Each container is approximately 8 ft wide and 20 ft long; there are two beds, two wall lockers and a heating / air conditioning unit in each one. Each container will house two Soldiers.

Your Soldier will also have the opportunity to have Satellite T.V. for their living areas. It's difficult for your Soldier to be far away from family and friends and just as difficult on all of you, but we're trying to improve everyday quality of life for them.



Also, Soldiers have the opportunity to shop at the Iraqi Mart; it's a consolidation of 10 mini stores that offer DVDs, Jewelry, Electronic Equipment, Rugs, Furniture, Barber Shop, Antiques and many other items.

Another concern you may have is Environmental Leave (EML); most Soldiers in the Rough Rider Battalion will be provided an opportunity to take EML. We're scheduled to start 1 Feb 06. Soldiers will be authorized to take 15 days leave where they choose. EML leave starts the day your Soldier arrives in the US, Germany or Qatar (Cutter). Example: Soldier requests leave 15 Jan through 28 Jan (14 Days); we will try to have Soldiers leave our location a few days prior because they

will have to be flown by helicopter to another base to catch a Military Aircraft to Kuwait. Some previous instances of delays include Aircraft availability in Iraq, Aircraft availability in Kuwait and seats available. Currently there are 4 "HUBS" in the US that your Soldier will be flown too.

Your Soldier will be flown to one of these locations, preferably the one closest to their leave destination. They will then be given a round trip Plane Ticket (free of charge) to their final destination. EML leave starts the day Soldier lands on US soil or any other destination (Country).

If Soldiers choose not to take EML they will be provided an opportunity to take 4 days of leave in theater.

Soldiers may either take EML or a 4 day pass, but not both. They will only have one choice and will not be authorized to visit any other place during deployment.

Thanks to everybody for supporting your Soldier; all of you are in your Soldier's thoughts and prayers.

Rough Rider 7



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HHC – A note from the High Ground



Convoys! Convoys! Convoys!

Well it's time for another edition of the Trailblazer Newsletter. A lot has happened since our last edition. We have completed the monumental task of deploying to Iraq and are getting settled into our new digs. The pace here is beyond anything that we have ever experienced before and we expect to be even busier as we assume responsibility for all of the missions in our area of Iraq. We are enthusiastically making improvements to all areas of the Camp in order to make Camp Duke the model for all others to emulate.

A few of the things that our Soldiers here on Camp Duke have to look forward to is a new MWR facility. It will house a bigger and better exercise facility that will enable our ever increasing population of Soldiers to maintain the highest level of physical fitness. It will also offer a great place to relax and play games, read, or just watch TV to catch up on what is going on back at home. The Soldiers of HHC will also be able to look forward to a new and improved PX

facility that will provide a greater variety of goods to our isolated oasis and an expanded, centrally located internet café and phone center to better serve them.

The Soldiers of HHC have worked long and hard to ready themselves and their families for this long deployment and their effort has not been for naught, we are the best prepared unit in this brigade going into this deployment. Our FRG has been very busy and has been working hard as we are headed out the door. My utmost confidence is in our FRG and our Rear Detachment and their abilities to handle any given situation back there as we are busy handling our day to day missions far from home.

Just as it has taken teamwork to accomplish the mission at work, continuous teamwork is also required between Soldiers and their families. Use the upcoming experiences to build upon and learn from. Every relationship is fluid and ever changing. The more positives a team

can encounter will only be a benefit in the future. Remember the FRG is for everyone, grandparents, parents, and anyone who is a loved one of a Soldier. The FRG has been established to help others help themselves.

It is truly a real world mission that we have all embarked upon and we must remember that we are all Part of the same team and our courage and commitment will carry us through. Even though the time frame seems insurmountable, the time that we will be here will go by quickly as there is much work to do before we can sit down and ponder going home to see loved ones.

Mid-tour leaves are fast approaching us and several of our Trailblazers will be heading home for a short escape to see loved ones and recharge. It will be a welcomed opportunity to recharge and prepare for the oppressive heat of the upcoming summer months. 1SG and I wish everyone a safe and enjoyable trip as they prepare for this wonderful opportunity.

Best Holiday wishes from the 1SG, myself and our families. Please remember our Rear Detachment team during the holiday season for they have one of the biggest jobs of all, taking care of our loved ones as we do our duty half way around the world. Please enjoy the photographs that follow. Cherish the fun times that we have had and see you on the high ground.

“Trailblazer 6”



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OUTLAWS! READY FOR BUSINESS!

The past three months before the deployment were extremely busy for the Outlaw family. Between NTC, block leave, all the weapons qualification ranges, gunnery with the new M114s, virtual convoy training, packing of containers, preparing vehicles and loading them on the trains, updating all information in the company in various areas, cleaning out the motor pool, splitting the property book with the rear detachment, going through the soldier readiness process (SRP) and attending days of training classes, the “normal” work day seemed to be a thing of the past. The company had been living and breathing deployment preparation, training and readiness and I felt confident that our soldiers were prepared and trained to do our mission in Iraq.

The advanced party successfully deployed and reached Kuwait safely; these Soldiers sacrificed a few more days than most of us and did an outstanding job. They drove all the equipment up to Camp Buehring from the seaport, staged it in company lines, set-up the living quarters for the rest of the company and numerous other tasks that allowed the company to successfully stage and train before going north into Iraq. I give them credit for their service and commitment to the mission and would like to express my thanks to them and their families.

The rest of the company deployed on the 25th of November, a day that will be burned into the minds and hearts of the Outlaw Soldiers and families for years to

come. Upon arrival in Kuwait, we got on a bus and went to Camp Buehring. While in Kuwait we participated in weapons ranges, to include a close quarter marksmanship range that was the best weapons training most of us have ever participated in, Convoy Live Fire, IED training and many more training events that were required before crossing the Iraqi border. All-in-all, the preparation for Iraq was very successful and it allowed us to venture into Iraq ready to take on most any situation that presented itself.

The Soldiers left Kuwait on convoys and by plane over a two week period. Most of us were very ready to leave Kuwait and get to FOB Duke to start working and do our mission. Now that we are here, I know that we can not only perform our mission but excel at supporting the 2nd Brigade.

Our initial thoughts upon arriving at FOB Duke were good; most of us who are veterans of OIF realized that the quality of life this time around would be much better. We have showers, flushing toilets, a nice DFAC, a small MWR facility, internet and phone capability and we are living in containers equipped with air conditioning and heat. The unit we replaced has been very helpful and the transition has been smooth. The POL platoon is refueling helicopters; the SSA has a large area with much more parts than we have ever had, the headquarters platoon fell in on a nice wooden command post building, the water section actually gets to do its mission purifying water for another Battalion and the transportation platoon has their own office and new vehicles to

train on and take on the road.

The company is getting familiar with the area and already pushing supplies to other FOBs. These convoys have been very successful and the soldiers are motivated to do their jobs and support the 2nd Brigade. Christmas day was relaxing; the soldiers were able to spend some personal time and the meals at the DFAC were great.

The Family Readiness Group has become more and more important during this deployment. Our FRG and its leaders are prepared to help and keep the Outlaw family informed and bonded while the soldiers are gone. The FRG leaders for Alpha Company can be contacted by going through the Rear Detachment.

These wonderful women have worked extremely hard to ensure the FRG continues to grow strong and keep families informed during the deployment. If your phone number, address, or email address changes during the time we are gone, please contact one of the FRG leaders and update your information so they can keep you informed of what's going on with Alpha Company and the Battalion.

One last note, please keep safety in mind as we are here in Iraq, every family member is a critical asset to the Outlaw and Roughrider family. Have a blessed holiday season and New Year.

“Outlaw 6”



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BLACK KNIGHTS – MOVING FORWARD!



Greetings from Camp Duke, Iraq! I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy New Year, and let everyone know that even though we are far away from home our thoughts are filled with memories of past holidays spent with our loved ones. It has been a very turbulent time for the company over the last few months, but after transitioning with the previous unit things are starting to settle down. Before I discuss some of the highlights from the deployment so far, I would like to announce that I will be changing the format of the Bravo Company article. Even though I enjoy writing these articles, I believe that the family members would like to read the thoughts and words of their loved ones and not just me. In future articles, I plan to incorporate the thoughts, feelings, and words of the Soldiers of Bravo Company.

Over the last two months we have left our families and friends and journeyed half across the world. Our first stop was Camp Buehring, Kuwait. We spent some time there preparing ourselves and our equipment to

move north into Iraq. While in Kuwait, we participated in a variety of training exercises including close quarter marksmanship skills, IED awareness, convoy battle drills, entry control point

training, and culminating in a day long convoy live fire exercise. This training was some of the best training available and the realistic nature of the training was extraordinary. Almost everyone agreed that it was extremely challenging and helped prepare us for our upcoming mission.

Unfortunately while we were in



New Vehicles – Hooah!

Kuwait, AT&T was in the process of replacing phone lines. This combined with the large number of Soldiers at the camp made it extremely difficult to call home. Hopefully, the word was passed

along to everyone back in the states through the family readiness group about the phone difficulties.

Fortunately, most of the company was able to make it to Camp Duke by mid December where the phone and internet situation is much better. The combination of living out of our duffel bags and anticipation of things to come made for unsettling times. However, we are now in the process of moving into our permanent living quarters. Overall the morale is very high and the Soldiers are enjoying what little free time they have. We are averaging 14 hour work days and rarely do the Soldiers leave the motor pool during the day. Between the guard duty, convoy support missions, overwhelming amount of maintenance jobs, and whatever else comes our way every Soldier is fully engaged in our mission.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone back home for all their support. The amount of mail we receive on a daily basis is extraordinary. I cannot tell you how much the Soldiers appreciate the letters and packages they receive. We are all looking forward to returning home and seeing our loved ones once again.

‘KNIGHT 6





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ARCHANGLES HAVE ARRIVED!

Greetings from Charlie Company, 204th Support Battalion...Archangels! The majority of the company has arrived, safely, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, with only a small number scheduled to arrive later.

doesn't arrive in time, I'm pretty certain that we will greatly appreciate it just the same. After months and months of waiting for this moment, these first couple of days seem dreamlike and very reminiscent of our time out at the

and the American way of life. With this in mind, we hope you will not take our service for granted. During this deployment, we will need your support like never before. As public opinion continues to sway in society, we pray that you will remain steadfast and unwavering in your commitment and support until that faithful day when we all return home. After being back home for a few months, we all may look back on this year's deployment and think, "Well, it wasn't that bad." In any case, we're doing well and we pray that all of you are doing well, also. You're in our thoughts, daily, and we're able to face the challenges ahead because we know what's waiting for us at home. Continue to take care of yourselves and take care of each other...and we will, definitely, do the same.

Archangels, Roughriders,
Warhorse, Ironhorse!

'Archangel 6'

Conditions, here in Kuwait, are pretty good and the challenge is to try to remain focused on the upcoming threat as we will only be here for a couple of weeks. Between now and the time we depart, there's plenty of training to get accomplished and additional equipment to be picked up. Overall, morale seems to be pretty high as the adrenaline builds in anticipation of the road ahead.

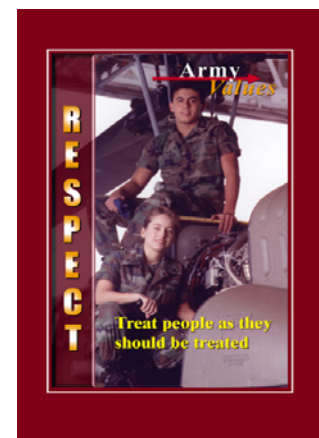
National Training Center (NTC). In other words, for what we're experiencing...and what we're going to experience...we are trained.

Serving in the U.S. Armed Forces is a dangerous job that many aren't able or willing to undertake. The life is intense and the training is intense because the job is intense and your sons, daughters, husbands, wives,

Enjoying some down time in Kuwait.

Our deployment address has been published. Feel free to prepare all your holiday packages and be ready to send as soon as you receive our address. Under the circumstances, if your package

fathers, and/or mothers have pledged to serve our country in the most admirable way possible...in defense of democracy, freedom,





The RoughRider RoundUp

a package.



We have been in Iraq now for over 4 weeks! We are adjusting to our FOB (Forward Operating Base) and soldiers are starting to get their rhythm. The pace is fast, but our soldiers are doing a great job accomplishing their missions.

We have a nice chapel that will seat around 70 soldiers. 120 soldiers attended services the week before Christmas and Christmas weekend we had 198 soldiers coming. We had a Christmas Eve Christian service and sang several carols. 3-16 FA's Chaplain preached and we had a wonderful time. The first Sunday I preached



Those yummy desserts!

on, "A Soldier's Faith" from Luke chapter 7 then Christmas Sunday I preached, "Who is this Baby Jesus?" from Isaiah 9:6.

Our faith can be such an important

Religious Support Team – Ready to help!



Camp Duke Chapel.

source of strength during these times of separation from family. I know it's helped me personally as well as my family. Don't be afraid to call the base chapel for help or assistance if you're troubled or discouraged and feel no one cares. As chaplains, we want to assist and help in any way we can.

The food here isn't too bad, especially in the dessert area. I know that based on the number of soldiers eating cakes, pies, ice cream and cookies. I have been good so far and only had one small piece of Pecan pie on Christmas day. HONEST!

I know soldiers appreciate getting cards and letters so please, keep that up. Also, I am working out a system to give out care packages to any soldier who wants one, E-5 and below. To do this, just address



The packages can be as a small shoe box if you like. Food, toiletries, phone cards, etc. Please just write at the bottom of the box whether it's for a male or female soldier or just write Soldier. Thanks for supporting these wonderful young men and women. We also appreciate your prayers. Please continue to pray for the safety of our soldiers, and for his protection on them.

My prayer today is, "May God guide you, protect you and may His blessings be upon you and your loved ones. Amen!"

When sending Care Packages please write:

Male/Female Soldier or just write Soldier!

Pictures from Overseas!



ACM's Awarded by 2BCT CMD for NTC Actions!



Until we meet again!



